Lady Raiders Fall Short Against Tar Heels

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ATLANTA, Ga. - Despite losing a chance to win its pool in a disappointing loss to Ball State in its first game Saturday, Middle Tennessee showed tremendous fight in its final game of the Buzz Classic against North Carolina before falling, 10-9 Saturday. The Lady Raiders (10-10) trailed 7-3 after five innings, but came off the deck with six in the sixth to take the lead and put a scare into the favored Tar Heels. North Carolina scored the winning run on an infield hit with two outs in the seventh. "It's disappointing to be so close and fall short, but I believe our team showed improvement and made strides against a tough field in this tournament," Lady Raider coach Cindy Connelly said. "Our players fought hard and gave themselves a chance to win the pool and advance. I thought we did an outstanding job offensively, but we made too many mental and physical mistakes that led to decisive runs for the opponent. We do come away from here with some positives on which to build." Middle Tennessee finished the day with 17 runs and 26 hits in the two games, but suffered losses in each one. "That's what is most frustrating," said freshman first baseman/pitcher Brittany Herald, who had an outstanding tournament. "We hit the ball well and put up some big numbers, but we didn't limit the opposition from doing the same thing." Herald led the Lady Raiders with a sizzling .462 batting average in the tournament. She finished with one home run, two doubles and three RBI. After banging out a season-high 16 hits against Ball State earlier in the day, the Lady Raiders collected 10 more hits against the Tar Heels. Cortney Mitchell, who led the nation with 27 doubles last season, rattled her 11th two-bagger of the season off the base of the left field fence to plate two runs in the sixth. She was 2-for-4 with two RBI and run scored in the setback. Katie Tompkins also had a strong game, going 2-for-4 with two runs scored in the leadoff spot. Catcher Angie Heubner was 2-for-4 with her team-leading sixth home run and a double, driving in two runs, while Dani DeCamino connected for her first home run of the season in the fifth. Leah Grothause, Jennifer Dorais and Michelle Wilkes all had hits and contributed to Middle Tennessee's late-game rally against North Carolina. The Lady Raiders will play at the University of Alabama-Birmingham Monday before completing their spring break trip at Samford Wednesday. **NOTES:** Middle Tennessee hit a whopping .341 in the Buzz Classic with six home runs, one triple and six doubles in its four games,

but the Lady Raiders also allowed a 5.45 ERA in the four game. The Lady Raiders had a chance to win their pool Saturday and carried leads into the bottom of the sixth in both games before falling short. Four Lady Raiders - Brittany Herald, Katie Tompkins, Dani DeCamino and Cortney Mitchell - all hit better than .400 in the Buzz Classic.

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